

Community Facilities Plan

This chapter of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* describes the City's approach to providing major facilities and services except for sewer and water services, roads and transit, which are addressed in other plan chapters.

Summary of Community Facilities Issues

The major community facilities issues are:

1. Sharing Facilities and Services

What should Eau Claire do, if anything, to increase its shared facilities and services?

2. Retired Schools or Places of Public Worship

How should schools or places of public worship that are closed be re-used within a neighborhood?

3. Airport Master Plan

Should the City incorporate the Airport Master Plan into the City's *Comprehensive Plan* and adjust its zoning ordinance?

4. University Master Plan

How should the City incorporate the University's Master Plan into the City's *Comprehensive Plan*?

Overview of the Community Facilities Plan

Attractive public facilities are important to maintaining the confidence in the community of homeowners and business people. Schools, libraries, parks and other facilities are all highly valued by residents and are important factors in where to buy or rent a place to live.

These and other facilities and services will help sustain the community through the inevitable cycles of deterioration and reinvestment, so the City should invest in them as generously as it can. The public sector should provide leadership in developing facilities that exemplify quality in design, construction, and maintenance. Besides helping build a sustainable community, attractive public facilities also build community pride.

Goal and Objectives

Locate and maintain public facilities and services so as to support the goals of compact growth, neighborhood revitalization, and sustainable new neighborhood design.

Objective 1 – Cost-Effective and High Quality Facilities

Provide public facilities in a cost-effective manner and build them to a high standard of quality.

Objective 2 – Schools

Coordinate urban growth, particularly new parks, with public elementary, middle and high schools.

Objective 3 – Airport

Ensure that any expansion of the airport is done in a manner that does not harm the nearby neighborhood.

Objective 4 – Police and Fire Services

Continue to provide a high level of police and fire services.

Objective 5 – Other Facilities and Services

Continue to cooperate with private companies and other units of government to provide necessary and desired facilities or services used by the broad community.

Objective 1 – Cost-Effective and High Quality Facilities

Provide public facilities in a cost-effective manner and build them to a high standard of quality.

Providing cost-effective public facilities and services is always a worthwhile objective for any City. However, that does not mean doing things for the least possible cost. High quality public facilities and services support private investment in neighborhoods, help retain residents and businesses, and build community pride and quality of life.

Recent economic recessions coupled with reductions in state aid to cities have eroded the City's budget to the point that essential staff and services have been trimmed. It is expected that fiscal conditions will eventually improve and return to historic norms, at which time deferred improvements can begin to be addressed. Until then, the community may have to live with a lower standard of service than it expects and deserves.

Fortunately, the community's long-term fiscal future seems bright because of its good highway access, its proximity to the Twin Cities, its regional retail, health care and educational industries, and its scenic environment.

An important factor in the City's ability to sustain long-term fiscal health will be the way in which it manages growth and redevelopment. Expanding the tax base without over-committing to expenses will help pay for the facilities and services that help renew the city and attract new residents and businesses.

Policies

1. High Quality

Construct and maintain facilities to the highest level of quality that is affordable. Since public facilities represent a collective effort of the entire community, they should be of high quality and demonstrate the expressed desire for an improved environment. In doing this, the public provides leadership in enhancing the urban environment.

2. Shared Facilities and Services

Increase shared services and facilities to the extent that it does not harm the City financially, impede its ability to attract annexation petitions, or diminish the quality of the service or facility to the citizens of Eau Claire.

When feasible, the City and related agencies will build facilities that can serve more than one purpose. Land and facilities shared between schools and parks is a prime example.

3. Compact Growth

Provide facilities and services with the intention of promoting compact, orderly urban growth and neighborhood revitalization. The location of community facilities should always be consistent with plans for future growth and development and should promote growth in the City of Eau Claire.

4. Accessibility for All People ~~the Handicapped~~

Continue to ensure that public buildings and parks comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and continue equitable advancements for community members.

Objective 2 -- Schools and Places of Worship

Coordinate urban growth, particularly new parks, with public elementary, middle and high schools.

The Analysis of Conditions described the service area of the Eau Claire Public School District, the locations of the schools, enrollment trends and district demographics.

The locations of the public elementary, middle and high schools are shown by Figure 14-1, Major Community Facilities, in the Community Facilities Assessment. Locations of future public schools shown on Figure 2-1, Planned Land Use, are only conceptual. All future public schools must be in locations that can be served by sewer and water lines from Eau Claire.

Policies

1. Cooperation between the City and the School District

Continue to cooperate with the Eau Claire Area School District for mutual benefit by locating schools and parks adjacent to one another and by coordinating the Land Use Plan and the District's plan for future school sites.

In 2015, no additional school sites were needed. However, three possible future locations were shown on the Land Use Plan map so that the question can be explored during the subdivision process.

2. Schools in Older Neighborhoods

Encourage the Eau Claire School District to maintain schools in the older neighborhoods and find sites in older neighborhoods when replacement sites are needed.

3. Retired Places of Public Worship

Allow retired places of public worship that are no longer intended for such use to be re-used for multiple-family housing or neighborhood-serving businesses as long as the neighborhood environment and character are protected. The following criteria will be reviewed with these situations:

- Negative effects on nearby housing are mitigated.
- Nearby roads and intersections can accommodate any increased traffic and maintain an acceptable level for service.
- The design and function of the commercial use is integrated with the area through site design, building materials, access, parking, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

4. University Master Plan and Event Center

Adopt by Use as a planning reference in this *Comprehensive Plan*, the 2011 *UW-EC Campus Master Plan*, which guides properties owned by the University. The University has prepared and adopted a plan for the long-term physical growth and enhancement of its campus. However, the City regulates land use and development around the campus and, thus, has an interest in how the University acquires property and extends its facilities.

Coordinate the community review of any proposal to enlarge the campus into an adjacent residential neighborhood, seeking to improve the quality of the neighborhood and the vitality of the university. Support the concept of increased student dormitory housing on campus.

Support the proposed Sonnentag event and recreation center by the University and its partners, which the City is a funding contributor. In conjunction, support the idea of master-planned redevelopment along the Menomonie Street corridor between Clairemont Avenue and the Hobbs Ice Arena that may include businesses and housing, centered on the University facility.

Objective 3 – Airport Growth

Coordinate improvement at the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in a manner that does not harm the nearby neighborhood.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport is located in the City and is jointly owned and operated by Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties. It is anticipated that number of flight operations will stay relatively flat or grow at a very slow rate over the next 10 to 20 years.

During 2008 to 2011, the passenger terminal building was expanded, renovated and reconfigured to better accommodate new security rules and provide an adequate secure passenger holding area. The project should adequately meet airport passenger needs for the plan's 20-year planning period.

In the *Airport Master Plan*, two alternative sites were identified for development of air cargo operations in the future. Both include cargo aircraft parking, a cargo logistics facility and ground vehicle parking. Alternative 1 is north of the general aviation hangars adjacent to Taxiway A with access via Hogarth Street. Alternative 2 is south of the airfield with access from 10th Avenue and Airport Road. Alternative 1 was preferred in the master plan.

The Airport Commission has requested that the City amend its *Comprehensive Plan* to allow for air cargo operations and other industrial activities not related to the airport. They also asked that the zoning be changed from P-Public to a new zone that is specific to the airport, similar to the zone administered by Eau Claire County, the owner of the airport. While there were no prospective tenants in 2014, airport representatives would like to retain the ability to consider this type of development if the opportunity is presented.

For the sake of flight safety, Eau Claire County administers Chapter 18.60 in its zoning ordinance, which restricts the height, setback, density and use of structures in four zones on and around the airport property, including lands in the City of Eau Claire or Chippewa County. Types of permitted on-airport land uses include, among others, air cargo facilities and intermodal facilities. The County Committee on Planning and Development receives a recommendation from the City of Eau Claire Community Development Department regarding any building or land use application on the airport property, all of which is within the City of Eau Claire.

Policies

1. Compatible Expansion

Encourage the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport to plan its facilities cooperatively with the City and give due consideration to the adjacent neighborhood.

Means of mitigating visual impacts include plantings and berms, building placement and façade treatments.

Any further airport improvements should be made contingent on additional actions that will safeguard or enhance the quality of the adjacent neighborhood.

2. Airport Zoning

Consider creating a new zoning district specific to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport so that the airport's rights and responsibilities can be clearly established as they pertain to on-airport land use and development.

This district would allow air cargo and intermodal facilities. It may also allow certain industrial activities not directly related to the airport, such as warehousing, that have limited traffic volumes and do not adversely affect adjacent neighborhoods. The new zoning district should establish minimum building setbacks and maximum heights, and include an administrative process in coordination with that of Eau Claire County.

The City's conditional use permit process would be useful in these non-aeronautical reviews. Increased truck traffic to and from the airport for cargo operations may become a concern. The district should not contravene the flight safety provisions of Chapter 18.60 of the Eau Claire County Code, Airport Zoning.

Objective 4 – Police and Fire Services

Continue to provide a high level of police and fire services.

Police and fire services are two fundamental and costly services provided by the City of Eau Claire.

Policies

1. Community Policing

The Eau Claire Police Department will continue to build on the success it has had across the city and neighborhoods with proactive and engaged “community policing”.

2. Cooperative Fire Services

Seek any useful economies through cooperation with Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties and the adjacent City of Altoona.

3. Fire Station Locations and Facilities Plan

Implement a policy based on the fire station study to improve fire stations, facilities and staffing and the advisability of any changes.



Fire station 8 near the airport was studied and found to be useful in providing coverage.

Objective 5 – Other Facilities and Services

Continue to cooperate with private companies and other units of government to provide necessary and desired facilities or services used by the broad community.

Some key services or facilities are licensed or indirectly regulated by the City, sometimes in cooperation with another body of government, such as the State or County.

Policies

1. Telecommunications

Continue to regulate through the zoning ordinance private antennae, towers, satellite dishes, re-transmitters and related structures as either accessory uses or conditional uses depending on the nature of the facility.

Continue to cooperate with private telecommunications companies who request to install lines in public road rights-of-way while imposing reasonable controls on their design, location and installation.

Continue to rely on private companies for Internet service. Maintain free, unsecured Internet Wi-Fi “hot spots” in several places such as City Hall, the Library, Phoenix Park among others, for use by the public and its employees.

2. Child Day Care

Continue to allow child care facilities through the zoning ordinance as conditional uses, including any regulations that may be imposed by the State of Wisconsin through its required license.

3. Solid Waste Recycling and Disposal

Continue to conduct solid waste collection, recycling, and composting through private companies licensed by the City. Dispose of solid waste that is not recoverable and continue oversight on landfill expansion, at a County sanitary landfill. Continue to allow recycling facilities in all commercial or industrial districts by conditional use permit.

4. Power Generation and Transmission

Continue to work with Xcel and other energy providers to ensure the continued supply of electricity, natural gas and other energy sources to the city and the region. Work together to reduce the community’s carbon footprint in line with the City’s 2050 carbon neutral and 100% renewable energy goals. Refer to the Renewable Energy Action Plan for more specifics.

Xcel Energy operates a coal-fired hydro-electric generation plant along the Chippewa River with water-powered turbines. There is a major transformer facility north of the plant along the Chippewa River near Dell’s Pond, and a major transmission line runs east-west across the City south of U.S. Hwy. 312.

Wind energy conversion systems are allowed by conditional use permit in all zoning districts. Solar is allowed either by building permit or conditional use permit.

Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Community Facilities Plan.

Table 13-1
Community Facilities Plan Actions

Action	Timing
Prepare a study in 2016. Implement a policy for fire station locations, facilities and staffing and the advisability of any changes.	2016 Continuous
Continue to cooperate with the Eau Claire School District for mutual benefit by locating schools and parks adjacent to one another.	Continuous
Consider adopting into this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> by reference the 2011 <i>Work with UW-EC on implementing their Campus Master Plan</i> as guidance for the properties owned by the University. Assist on the <i>Sonnentag Event Center redevelopment site</i> .	Continuous 2016
Continue to investigate the feasibility of locating a convention center in the city.	Continuous
Consider creating a new zoning district specific to the airport so that the airport's rights and responsibilities can be clearly established as they pertain to on-airport land use and development.	2016
Continue to provide City oversight on the expansion committee of 7-Mile Creek Landfill so community waste needs are met. Support City or County programs to reduce the landfill demand through material conservation, reuse, composting and recycling programs.	Continuous